あすかコミックス

無頼—BURAI—

岩崎陽子（いわさきようこ）

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MY BAD
ドカッ
YOU WERE SPACING OFF
OW!!
HEY, WAIT A SEC!
YOU BUMPED INTO ME ...

無-BURAI-頼

HAKUMA

HE DISAPP-EARED ...!!
WAS IT JUST AN ILLUSION?
WHITE CLOTHES, WHITE HAIR
WITH RED EYES, AND HE SMILED AT ME..
DRUNK SAMURAI WEARING A GAUDY HAIRSTICK
AND A PSEUDO GHOST
IT MUST REALLY BE THE END OF THE WORLD IF THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS LIKE THAT
...AND THANKS TO THAT
I MISSED WHACKING THAT DRUNK SAMURAI

SHIRA-KAMI?
AH...
THAT MUST BE THE SHIRAKAMI CULT
NOPE
YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, HAJIME?
THERE YOU GO
MIRACLE ....YOU SAY
I DON'T BELIEVE IN IT
THE PERSON THAT YOU SAW MUST HAVE BEEN HIM
HE ALSO HAS EVERY -THING WHITE INCLUDING HIS HAIR
I HEARD THAT THE HOLY FOUNDER WORKS MIRACLE
IT IS QUITE POPULAR

I DON'T CARE WHAT SAVING GRACE HE MIGHT HAVE
HE CAN NOT BE OF ANY GOOD
IF HE TURNS PEOPLE INTO SUCH THINGS!
...LOOK AT THEM
THEIR HOLLOW EYES!
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL
THEY ARE THE FOLLOWERS OF THE SHIRA-KAMI
I WILL LEAVE THE MONEY HERE
I CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE CREEPY PE...
AND AT MASTER *KUBOI'S CITY AS WELL
*SHOGUNATE
DON'T YOU THINK ANYTHING OF IT AT ALL?
...HAJIME

YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS ARE SO PASSIONATE ABOUT EXCLUSIVISM OR HONOURING THE EMPEROR
...SO LEVEL-HEADED
IF THEY NEED THE SAVING GRACE
THEN IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO SAY ANYTHING
PEOPLE AT MY DOJO HATE ME
BECAUSE OF THAT,
I JUST DO NOT REALLY SEE FIT TO DISCUSS ISSUES THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH US
.....
SAITO
WHAT !?
YOU SAY IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A SPINELESS SHOGUNATE?

NOTHING IS GOING TO CHANGE WITH ONLY DEBATES AND PRAYERS
IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH IT THEN GO DO IT YOUR-SELF
ドン
...AH
SORRY ABOUT THAT
ツッ
I'M NOT A FOOL YOU KNOW

SHIRAKAMI CULT?

YOU...WHY THE HELL DID YOU LET HER GO?
YOU !!!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
!?
...AH!
I was not drunk
YOU GUYS ARE THE DRUNKS WHO BUMPED INTO ME!!

WHAT THE ...
IT'S THE SLOWPOKE FROM BEFORE
BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER
IF YOU ARE A MAN, THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP THAT WOMAN?
THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME REASONS WHY SHE WAS BEING CHASED
JUST THEN,
SHE SLIPPED HER HAND IN MY POCKET
.....
♪WHAT IS IT?
IT LOOKS TO ME THAT YOU HAVE TO HELP HER OUT NOW...
WHAT!?

IF SHE WAS BEING FOLLOWED BECAUSE OF THAT PILL BOX
YOU, AS HER ACCOMPLICE WOULD NOT GO FREE IF SHE GETS CAUGHT
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!!
WHAT'S WITH THAT LOGIC?
HOW CAN IT TURN OUT LIKE THAT!?
THERE'S NO POINT IN ARGUING WITH HARADA -SAN
HE'S THE TYPE THAT GOES BY HIS INTUITION
INTUITION!?
THOSE PEOPLE THAT WERE AFTER THAT WOMAN,
DIDN'T YOU THINK THEY WERE STRANGE?
THEY WERE UNRULY YET ODDLY CALM
BESIDES ...

!
WE'RE IN TROUBLE ALREADY
WHO ARE THESE ...
I DIDN'T SENSE THE WILL TO KILL EARLIER
SEE?
DAMN I WAS RIGHT
IT'S NOT NORMAL TO HAVE SO MANY MEN GOING AFTER A WOMAN
.....

HAH
HAH
HAH
LET'S JUST GET HER OUT OF HERE FIRST
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING BEHIND THIS
!?
JUST IN TIME ♡

WE'LL DEAL WITH THE REST OF THEM
GO FIRST
GOT IT!
AHHH
THERE YOU GO!
YEP!
LET'S GO, OKITA!

HAH
HAH
HAH
I AM RETURNING THIS TO YOU
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE YOU ARE IN, BUT
I DON'T WANT TO BE YOUR ACCOMPLICE
...IF YOU PLEASE, I WOULD RATHER YOU KEEP IT
I KNOW THAT IT'S TROUBLESOME FOR YOU
BUT I AM LEAVING IT IN YOUR CARE AS I FEEL THAT YOU'RE TRUSTWORTHY
.....
HAH
HAH

YOU GO FIRST, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS!
RUN!
OK!

IT'S THE FOUNDER OF THE SHIRAKAMI CULT
...!
WHAT THE!?
HUH?
I...
OI! ARE YOU OK?
...YOUR TARGET WAS THE SHIRAKAMI CULT
A SPY OF KOUGI ...!
...I ....AM ...

GIVE IT TO ...
TAKAMORI -SAMA.....OF HATAMOTO .....
THAT PILL BOX
PLEASE...
.....
DIDN'T MAKE IT IN TIME...
HE...Y
IT SEEMS THAT SHE WAS A SPY OF KOUGI
HER TARGET WAS THE SHIRA -KAMI CULT

...LET'S GET OUT OF HERE
...AND WE'LL JUST LEAVE HER HERE?
BANYA CAN NOT DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT
EVEN IT IT'S REGARDING THE SECRET AGENCY, THINGS WILL JUST GET MORE COMPLICATED
WE CAN NOT CAUSE TROUBLE FOR KONDOU-SENSEI AND THE PEOPLE OF SHIEIKAN
HOW ABOUT YOU COME WITH US?
EHH?
BUT I'M THE ONE RES-PONSIBLE FOR THIS .....
THEY WOULD BE TROUBLED ....
EVERYONE WHO ARE AT SHIEIKAN DOJO ARE REALLY GOOD PEOPLE...
BESIDES, WE'ARE THE ONE WHO GOT YOU INTO THIS MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE ANYWAY

OKITA SOUJI
I AM A DISCIPLE OF TENNEN RISHIN-RYU* AT SHIEIKAN DOJO
HARADA SANOSUKE
YOU CAN SAY I'M A FREELOADER OF SHIEIKAN
*RYU: STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP
SAITO HAJIME
.....
ITTO-RYU
天然理心流
試衛館
KONDOU ISAMI
I'M THE MASTER OF SHIEIKAN
THAT WAS UNFORTUNATE

INOUE GENZA-BUROU
HIJIKATA TOSHIZOU AND
THESE ARE OUR FRIENDS AND DISCIPLES FROM LONG BACK,
NAGA-KURA SHINPA-CHI
TOUDOU HEISUKE
YAMANAMI KEISUKE
THESE CAME FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OUT OF RESPECT FOR ME
I AM SORRY FOR ALL THE TROUBLE
SAITO-KUN
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME
...I SEE
WE ACTUALLY SYMPA-THISE YOU
NO ONE HERE THINKS MUCH OF IT
IT'S AN EVERYDAY THING THAT SANO BRINGS TROUBLE

WHY IS THE SECRET AGENCY OF KOUGI BE INVOLVED WITH SUCH A THING?
BUT, THE SHIRAKAMI CULT IS JUST
ONE OF THE POPULAR RELIGIONS THAT IS FAMOUS FOR ITS MIRACULOUS POWER
NAGA-KURA-KUN, YOU SAY THAT
BUT IT'S ALSO TRUE THAT THERE ARE RUMOURS ABOUT THE SHIRAKAMI CULT
THERE ARE MANY WHO ARE KNOWN FOR ANTI-BAKUFU APPARENTLY
I ALSO HEARD THAT THEY ARE STOCKING UP ON AMMUNITION
YAMA-NAMI...
HMM?
HIJI-KATA-KUN?
LOOK AT THIS
OPIUM ...ISN'T IT...!?
THAT IS ONE INTERES-TING MIRACU-LOUS POWER

I WAS TOLD TO GIVE IT TO A HATAMOTO, WHOSE NAME IS TAKAMORI
HMM...
YAMA-NAMI
TOU-DOU
YOU ARE FROM "HOKU SHIN ITTO-YU" AREN'T YOU?
THE AMOUNT OF DISCIPLES OF CHIBA DOJO IS QUITE LARGE
THERE MUST BE ENOUGH DAIMYOU AND HATAMOTO AMONG THEM
THAT'S TRUE ...
OK, I'LL LOOK INTO IT
TAKA-MORI...
YOU DO NOT NEED TO WORRY SAITO-SAN

..... LET'S HOPE
THAT IS THE CASE ....
SO YOU HAVE RETRIEVED IT SAFELY
YES!
AS WE HAVE MANY FOLLOWERS IN THE TAKAMORI HOUSEHOLD
SEEDS OF CALAMITY... IMPURITY NEEDS TO BE "CLEANSED"
ERASE ALL OF THOSE WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THIS

THAT'S RIGHT
ESPECIALLY THE DOJO IN TOWN
"PURIFY" THE SHEIKAN DOJO
天然理心流 試衛
HE DIDN'T EVEN GET ANY SCRATCH FROM TOUDOU AND NAGAKURA
HE'S QUITE GOOD
HE'S ABOUT THE SAME AS OKITA
WHAT'S WRONG GEN-SAN ?

KONDO-SENSEI AND HIJIKATA-SAN ALREADY KNOW,
DON'T YOU?
THINKING THAT WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER PERSON WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE FINANCES OF THE DOJO
IT IS JUST A SIGH OF JOY
SMELLS LIKE ALL OF US HERE .....
SAITO .....
OKITA-SAN
HOW IS IT?
ARE YOU COMFOR-TABLE HERE?

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH...
I'M A BIT LOST
ALL THE PEOPLE AROUND ME UP UNTIL NOW FOUND PASSION IN LOGIC
BUT WHEN THE ACTION IS NEEDED, THEY BECAME RATHER CAUTIOUS
PEOPLE HERE JUMP RIGHT INTO THINGS
THEY'D RATHER ACT FIRST
AND THINK LATER
THOSE WHO GATHERED AT THE SHIEIKAN ARE
TRUE TO THEIR HEARTS
THEY DON'T REALLY DISLIKE DOING THE WRONG THING
BUT RATHER THEY HATE TO BE DISHONEST

SAITO-SAN
YOU TOO, AREN'T YOU?
YOU SEEM TO BE FITTING RIGHT IN HERE AT SHIEIKAN
.....
I'M...
TRUE TO MY HEART...?

SHIRAKAMI CULT FOLLOWERS ...!!
NICE GOING!! SURPRISE ATTACK
IT APPEARED
THEY HAVEN'T RECEIVED THE PILL BOX
DON'T KILL THEM!
CAPTURE THEM AND FIND OUT WHAT'S WITH THAT PILL BOX!

SO SUITED TO FIGHT IN ACTUAL BATTLES
THEIR MOVEMENTS DIFFER SO MUCH WHEN THEY FIGHT WITH SWORDS . . .
THEY ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT WHEN THEY ARE AT THE DOJO
AH...
HUH...?

NOW THAT YOU'VE COME TO YOUR SENSES...
LET'S HEAR ABOUT THE SHIRAKAMI
AH...
UWAH...
HAVE MERCY ON ME!
LORD SHIRA-KAMI
FORGIVE ME
Get away!
Harada-san
They look strange
!
FORGIVE ME!

THEY EX-PLODED ...
.....
WHAT IS THE SHIRAKAMI CULT REALLY?
YOU SHOULD ...
!!
LEAVE ME BE
THIS WAS ORIGINALLY MY ROTTEN LUCK
SAITO-SAN

I WILL SEE THIS MATTER TO THE END
THAT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO
THAT WOMAN SAID ....
THAT I'M TRUST-WORTHY ....
BUT NOT ONLY I FAILED TO PROTECT HER
I FAILED TO DELIVER THE PILL BOX
I CAN'T JUST LET YOU GO ALONE
.... IF YOU ARE GOING TO ATTACK THE SHIRAKAMI CULT
AT LEAST HARADA-SAN AND I ARE RESPONSIBLE TOO

IT'S NO LONGER JUST YOUR PROBLEM
SAITO-KUN
TO SEE THE RIGHT AND NOT FOLLOW IT MEANS LACKING COURAGE
WE ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE SHIEIKAN
WE WILL ATTACK THE HEAD QUARTER OF THE SHIRAKAMI CULT!!
ラッシュ!!
EXACTLY WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR!
WAY TO GO KONDO-SENSEI!
LET'S GO GET THEM...!
I BET...
THEY ARE ENJOYING THIS
THEY OBVIOUSLY ARE!?
Yeah,
It's a raaaaiiid
It's a raid

白神
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, HIJIKATA-SAN?
THEY TOOK OUR SWORDS AT THE ENTRANCE
WE'LL FIND A WAY
OPIUM INFUSED INCENSE...

FOUNDER!
FOUNDER!
WHITE MEANS PURITY
WHITE MEANS THE LIGHT
AND WHITE MEANS REBIRTH....
THE WHITE GOD IS ANGRY
THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH CHAOS AND IMPURITIES
IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE NEW ERA
THIS WORLD NEEDS TO BE CLEANSED
THE WHITE GOD DESIRES PURIFICATION

EDO...
THE LAND OF
DEFILEMENT!
FIRST, THIS
LAND NEEDS
TO BE
CLEANSED!
REBIRTH SHALL
SURELY BE
PROMISED
TO THOSE
WHO ASSIST
THE DEEDS
OF THE GOD
HOWEVER,
TO THOSE
WHO INTERFERE
WITH THE
DEEDS OF
THE GOD
ONLY DEATH
SHALL BE
PROMISED!

They took our swords but have theirs!
This ain't fair!
Just thankfully receive it
In this kind of situation!

THE LIGHT!
DURING THE BATTLE IN THE DARK
IT'S TO THEIR DISADVANTAGES DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE
BUT THEY ACCURATELY MAKE THE ATTACKS!?
THE POWER OF THE LORD, THE FOUNDER
Set it on fire!
I can't see what's going on!
HIJIKATA-SAN!?
THAT'S GOING A LITTLE FAR
THAT'S A SERIOUS CRIME...

しれっ
WELL IT IS INEVITABLE
.....
UWAH --
REALLY
YOU GUYS ARE INSANE!
YOU'RE NOT THAT BAD YOURSELF, SAITO-SAN

Toshi-san!
Don't you think the fire is too much?
INDEED...
オオオオ
The founder disappeared!
Hijikata-san!
Kondo-sensei
Retreat!
Leave the complex for now!
HE WANTS TO BURN US ALL ALONG WITH THE FOLLOWERS
!

ゴオオオ
Founder!
GIVEN TO THE LAND OF DEFILEMENT
PURIFYING FIRE

IT'S FLOATING!?
THE FIRE!

IS THE SIGN OF THE WARS AND FIRE THAT WILL FILL THIS LAND
THE BATTLE AND THE FIRE OF THIS DAY
SHIRAKAMI CULT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THIS WORLD
YOU ARE DESTINED TO BE SWALLOWED BY THAT FIRE AND WARS...
THE TEACHING OF SHIRAKAMI PERISHED A MOMENT EARLIER
ALONG WITH THIS LAND OF DEFILEMENT!
SAITO!!
We won't let you!

Cover for Saito-kun!
Stop the followers!

ILLUSION ...!
WHERE IS THE ACTUAL ONE!?

CONTROL THE FIRE!
IT'S OVER!
CAN YOU KILL ME?
SINCE I BECAME SERIOUSLY ILL
I LOST ALL THE PIGMENTATION
I CAN'T EVEN MOVE A FINGER WITH EASE
CAN YOU?

GU, AHH!?
HOW-EVER
INSTEAD OF THE BODY THAT IS INCONVENIENT
I GOT THE POWER OF A GOD
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT,
THE ILLUSION OF PAIN ....

BUT
YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND MY PAIN
MY PAIN IS NOT SO SIMPLE
PAIN IN REALITY CAN NEVER EXCEED THE PAIN THAT IS REAL
ILLUSION ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN PRODUCE INDEFINITE PAIN

TOKUGAWA IEYOSHI .....
THAT'S MY FATHER'S NAME
THE HEIR OF THE 12TH SHOGUN...!?
DA..
THE ERA OF TOKU-GAWA SHOULD BE DES-TROYED
IT MIGHT AS WELL BE DESTROYED
IF IT CAN'T EVEN ACCEPT ME!!

.....
PURI-
FICATION
YOU SAY
...
YOU JUST WANT
REVENGE FOR
YOURSELF

!!
SAITO!
SAITO!!
THE FIRE DIED DOWN ....!
UGH...
THE FOLLOWERS SEEM TO HAVE COME TO THEIR SENSES
IF HE IS OKAY, HE'LL COME TO SHEIKAN
LET'S GO BACK
BUT SAITO IS...!
.... LET'S GO BACK
IT'LL BE CUMBERSOME AS THE FIREMEN AND OFFICERS FLOCK AROUND HERE

I GUESS
SO....
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW SURPRISED I WAS
I SAW THAT MASSIVE FIRE BALL LAST NIGHT!
BUT THE NEWS CLAIMED THAT IT WAS AN ILLUSION OF THE OPIUM ADDICTS
THE END OF THE SHIRAKAMI CULT....
THE CAUSE OF FIRE WAS DUE TO CARELESS HANDLING OF THE TORCH
THE FOUNDER IS THE THIRD SON OF HATAMOTO
NEVER KNOW HOW MUCH OF IT IS TRUE.....

IT'S TRUE ABOUT HIM BEING THE THIRD SON OF HATAMOTO
HUH?
NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE MAKER, HE IS STILL A BLOOD LINE OF HATAMOTO
IF THEY FIND OUT THAT I KILLED HIM, THEY WON'T JUST LET IT BE
BECAUSE OF THAT, I WHO KILLED HIM, CAN'T STAY IN EDO
YEAH RIGHT, YOU SHOULDN'T PULL MY LEGS
WHERE ARE YOU HEADING OFF TO?
IT WILL BE LONELY AROUND HERE
KYOTO...

IF I CAN'T STAY IN EDO
I MIGHT AS WELL GO SOMEWHERE INTERESTING

I SEE ...
THEY SEEM TO HAVE MUCH TROUBLE
A GROUP OF ROSHI* FROM EDO?
BUT APPARENTLY THEY ARE SOME THINKING OF STAYING BACK
*ROSHI: MASTERLESS SAMURAI
I CANT GO TO KYOTO WITHOUT SAYING THANKS TO THE PEOPLE OF SHIEIKAN...
COME TO THINK OF IT ...
A GROUP OF ROSHI FROM EDO ...
TRUE TO THE HEARTS
YOU TO, SAITO-SAN

WHEN THEY SWEEP KYOTO AS THE SHINSENGUMI

IT'S JUST A LITTLE BIT HARDER...

★ HAKUMA ★ *The end*

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NECK SAVING 首守り（くびもり）

MIBU – RONIN GUILD QUARTER
SAITO
LET'S GO CHECK OUT
THE HEADS!
... HEADS ?

THE WOODEN HEADS?
YOU KNOW
THOSE HEADS THAT WERE PUT ON DISPLAY AT THE RIVER BANK OF SANJO
HE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND YOU WITH THAT KIND OF DESCRIP-TION, SANO!
YEAH
WOODEN STATUES OF SUCCESSIVE ASHIKAGA SHOGUNS ENSHRINED AT THE TOJIIN TEMPLE
IT'S AN UNPRECE-DENTED EVENT WHERE THEIR HEADS HAVE BEEN REMOVED AND PUT ON DISPLAY.
CLEARLY, IT WAS MALICIOUS INSINUATION TARGETED TOWARD THE HOUSE OF SHOGUN
DISPLAYED BY THE RADICAL PRO-EMPEROR RONIN GROUP

OH, THAT!
WHAT !?
DID YOU SEE THE DISPLAY SCENE?
IT WAS QUITE A STIR
I'M JEALOUS
IT HAPPENED THE DAY WE ARRIVED IN KYO.
WE WOULD HAVE LOVED TO SEE IT
SHIN-PACHI
OI OI
DIDN'T YOU LEAVE THE MAIN SQUAD
SO YOU CAN CARRY OUT THE ACTUAL PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THE SHOGUN?
WOULDN'T THAT BE CONTRADICTING..
..and impru-dent?
YOU ARE FROM EDO SO YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND
HOW FRUSTRATING IT IS TO BE LEFT OUT FROM THE CURRENT NEWS.
THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.
NO ...

SO,
WE FIGURED THAT WE SHOULD AT LEAST GO LOOK AT THE WOODEN STATUES
YOU GOT HERE A BIT EARLIER THAN WE DID
WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ALREADY KNOW THE WAY
TOJIIN TEMPLE
I THINK I KNOW HOW TO GET THERE...
YOU SEEM SO CARE-FREE.
NOW THAT YOU LEFT THE MAIN RONIN GUILD,
IT'S EVEN UNCERTAIN WHETHER YOU CAN REMAIN IN KYO WITHOUT PROPER SUP-PORTS.
SERI-SAWA KAMO ...!
YOU THINK THIS IS A JAUNT.
NIIMI NISHIKI
THEY COULDN'T HAVE ANY CONNEC-TION TO RELY ON
KONDO'S GROUP IS JUST AN OBSCURE PARTY AFTER ALL...
YOU CAN'T EXPECT MUCH OUT OF THEM, SERIZAWA-SENSEI.

MY, MY
I MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN THE WRONG ASSOCIATION.
!
K-ch
IT'S NOT LIKE WE WANTED TO HAVE AN ASSOCIATION WITH YOU!
BECAUSE WE ARE OBSCURE, WE CAME ALL THE WAY DOWN TO KYO TO MAKE OUR MARK
WELL, TRUTH HURTS
WHAT !?

OKITA!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ON SERIZAWA'S SIDE!
BUT ISN'T THAT THE TRUTH?
SERIZAWA IS THE MOST FAMOUS AMONG US.
IF WE CAN'T HOLD ONTO SOMETHING, WE MIGHT AS WELL CLUTCH A STRAW.
WE CAME HERE SCRAPPING THE DOJO, WE CAN'T RETURN WITHOUT ANY RESULT.
IT'S GOOD THAT KONDO-SENSEI AND HIJIKATA-SAN AREN'T HERE TO HEAR THIS.
INDEED
THE SHIEIKAN GHOUP LED BY KONDO ISAMI AND A GROUP LED BY SENIZAWA KAMO SEPARATED FROM THE MAIN SQUAD.
I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD SAY SIMPLE-MINDED
OR JUST THOUGHT-LESS
THEY FOUND OUT THE RONIN SQUAD'S PUHPOSE TO PROTECT THE YISITING SHOGUN WAS JUST A PLOY,
THEN THE TNUE PUHPOSE IS THE DEFEAT OF THE SHOGUN.

I GUESS
I'M ALSO PECULIAR TO HAVE JOINED THE GROUP THAT LEFT THE MAIN SQUAD...
WE ALREADY KNOW THAT WE NEED THE BACKUP
UNLESS WE HAVE SOME SORT OF STATUS,
WE'RE JUST A DANGEROUS GROUP OF UNRELIABLE RONINS.
YAMANAMI-SAN AND TOUDOU-SAN ARE INQUIRING THE PEOPLE AROUND HOKUSHIN ITTO-RYU...
EVEN KNOWING THE CHANCE IS SLIM
HOW ABOUT KONDO-SENSEI AND HIJIKATA-SAN?
OF COURSE
THEY'VE BEEN RUNNING AROUND LOOKING FOR REINFORCE-MENT
DO THEY HAVE ANY CON-NECTION?

THEY ARE DIFFERENT FROM US WHO ONLY KNOW THE WAYS OF THE SWORDS
HIJIKATA-SAN IS SHARP
AND KONDO-SENSEI IS TRUSTED BY MANY.
Actually, dance is his specialty
LET'S NOT SAY ANYTHING...
Is weaker than Okita
LET'S GO ON A RELAXING JAUNT ♡
WHATEVER HAPPENS, HAPPENS ANYWAY.
SHIEIKAN GROUP... I SEE...
It's none of my business, but you should be careful with your words if you want to keep your friends, Okita!

WHY IS IT THAT YOU NEVER COME OUT WITH US, SAITO...?
I NEVER LIKED BANDING TOGETHER ...
IT LOOKS ALMOST LIKE A GHOST HOUSE.
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
WE CANNOT HEAD BACK WITHOUT SEEING THEM, CAN WE?
REIKOUDEN THAT HAS THE STATUES ARE OVER HERE.

I'M OPENING IT...
YEAH
THE HEADS IZ

NOT ONLY THREE.....!
ALL OF THEM ARE MISSING THEIR HEADS ...!?
THE HEADS WERE SUPPOSE TO RETURN TO THE STATUES AFTER THAT DAY
IS THIS THE DOING OF THE RADICAL RONINS AGAIN!?
LET'S LOOK FOR THEM!
THEY MIGHT STILL BE AROUND
ドドドドド

HH!
HH!
I DON'T SEE ANYONE SUSPICIOUS..!
...SHIT!
DID YOU FIND SOMETHING?
WHAT IS IT?
HARADA-SAN!

YOU...
MONS-
TERS
...!
ゴロゴロ
.....

HA-RADA-SAN!
ARE YOU OK, HARADA-SAN?
!
INTRU-DERS!
WE FOUND THE INTRUD-ERS!
わあ
わあ!
わあ!
INTRUD-ERS!
YOU GOT US INTO QUITE A TROUBLE
MIBU — RONIN GUILD QUARTERS

OUR SUPPORT-ER...
WE HAVE BEEN PREPARING TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH LORD AIZU, THE GUARDIAN OF KYOTO
JUST AS WE'RE ABOUT TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS, YOU MADE SUCH MISCONDUCT...!
BUT SERIZAWA-SENSEI,
THAT WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE PEOPLE AT THE TEMPLE
AS WE EXPLAINED TO YOU, WE WERE SEARCHING FOR THE INTRUDERS

YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND
THE GUARDIAN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RELEASE THE PERPETRA-TOR OF THE STATUE HEAD INCIDENT...
TO HIM, THE HEADS OF THE STATUES ARE..
THE BITTER MEMORY OF HIS LOSS ITSELF
I WONDER HOW HE WOULD FEEL
IF THERE ARE MEN WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT
AMONG THE RONINS WHO PLEADED FOR HIS SUPPORT.
KONDO -KUN.
...YES

IF YOU FAIL TO DO SO
WE WILL ASK FOR THE GUARDIAN'S SUPPORT AFTER YOUR REMOVAL FROM OUR GROUP
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THE MATTER RESPONSIBLY
IF THEY ARE YOUR APPRENTICES, THEN YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT
110
IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?
I DON'T PLAN ON FALLING TOGETHER
OF COURSE!

HIJI-KATA-SAN
MAN
THE PROBLEM THIS TIME SEEMS A BIT DIFFICULT
LISTEN...
HIJI-KATA-SAN,
HE'S FALLEN ILL
WHERE IS THAT SANO?
IF THAT'S ABOUT THE MONSTERS
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT

TOSHI-SAN
KEEP OUT OF IT, KONDO-SAN
GO CAPTURE THE REAL PERPETRATOR...
HIJIKATA-SAN
YOU SAY REAL PERPETRATOR BUT...
CAPTURE HIM
YOU DARE NOT SAY YOU CAN'T...!

AHH, AT THIS POINT, THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO
HIJI-KATA-SAN—
SAITO
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WHAT TO DO, WELL ..
NAGA-KURA-SAN
WHAT SHOULD WE DO ?
SAITO ...?

ARE TIGHTLY CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER
THOSE GUYS
A THING LIKE RESPONSIBILITY
IS WHAT A PERSON WITHOUT MUCH RELATION-SHIP TO OTHERS SHOULD TAKE
THAT'S OKAY
I DON'T PREFER TO BAND TOGETHER

GET UP! SANO!
HA-RADA-SAN!
SANO
NOW ISN'T THE TIME TO FALL ILL!
COME ON, GET UP!
WE HAVE TO GO CAPTURE THE PERPE-TRATOR
THE PERPE-TRATOR?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THAT'S A MONS-TER!
I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES
I AM NOT GOING TO DEAL WITH MONSTERS AND SLUGS
NEVER!!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
SLUGS FROM SOUTHERN COUNTRIES ARE
LIKE TH.. THIS.. TTTHHH-HIIIIISSS!!
YOU PROBARLY DON'T KNOW BUT
YES, I GOT YOU ABOUT THE SLUGS
ON TOP OF THAT, THE TOP SIDE IS LIKE, MOTTLED AND BROWN
SAITO-SAN IS MISSING
HE IS MOST LIKELY HEADING TO THE TOJIIN TEMPLE

WHAT DID YOU SAY..?
!

INDEED
HE DOES SEEM TO HAVE SOME GUTS.
JUST AS I PREDICTED ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
NIIMI...
NIIMI!
SERI-ZAWA!
I'M SURE YOU JOINED THE RONIN SQUAD WITH SOME SORT OF AMBITION
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S RATHER SILLY TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR KONDO AND HIS GANG?
SAITO-KUN...
SERIZAWA-SENSEI THINKS VERY HIGHLY OF YOU

THE INCIDENT WITH THE WOODEN STATUES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KONDO'S GROUP...
WE ARE EXPECTING A WISE DECISION FROM YOUR PART
...
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY...
SAITO-KUN?
THAT NOISE CAME FROM REIKOUDEN ....!?

BUT NOT TO JOIN YOU TWO .....!
IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY
I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE
WAIT!
NIMI, DON'T
IT APPEARS THAT THERE WERE SOMEONE ELSE AHEAD OF US
KONDO'S GROUP SEEMS TO BE QUITE LUCKY
LET US LEAVE FOR NOW
EITHER WAY, IT WILL WORK OUT FOR US..

WHOAAA!
MOVE!
!
ゴトッ…
ゴトッ…
……
SHIT!

ゴゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴゴ
.....

SAI-
TO...!
HEEEY
!!
AHHH
!?

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!?
LET ME GO!
WE HEARD THE WOODEN STATUES ARE STILL NEWS WORTHY...
COPY CAT CRIME!
BUT! WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING YET.
IF WE HAD KNOWN THAT THEY ARE SO EERIE
SHIN-PACHI!
OKI-TA!
CAPTURE THEM!
WE WOULD NEVER HAVE THINK OF DOING SUCH A THING...!
IF WE HAD KNOWN THAT THEY ARE SO EERIE

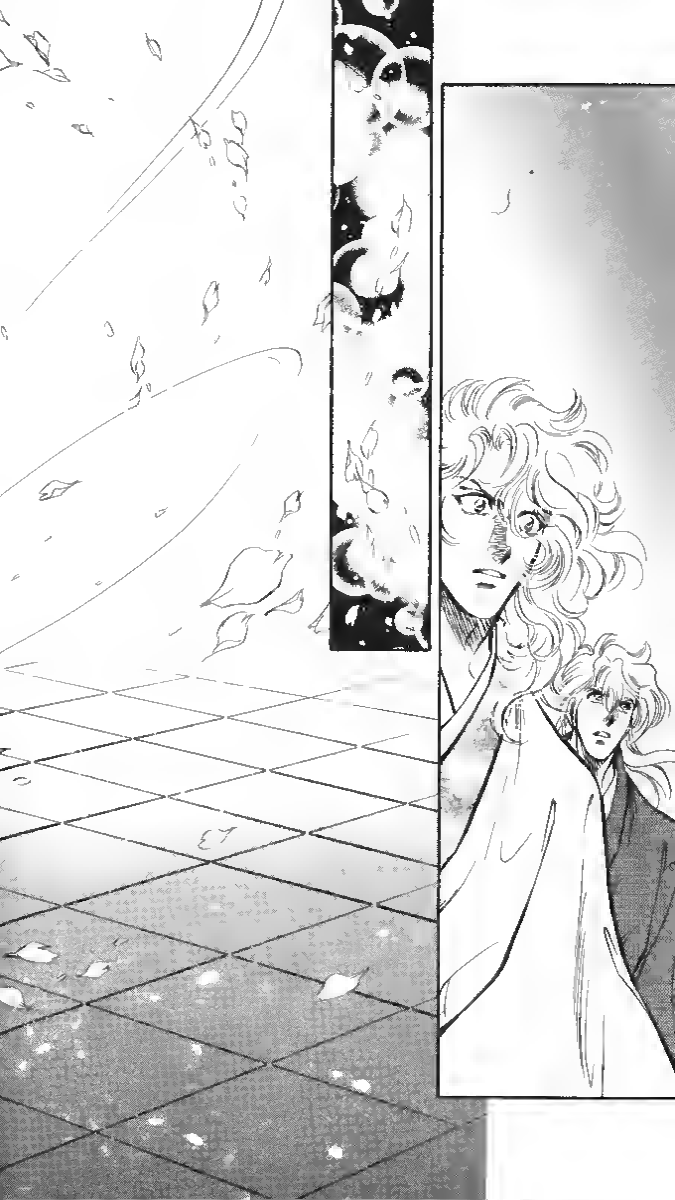
OPEN THE DOOR!
SAI-TO!
ARE YOU IN THERE SAITO?
NO!
IF THE HEADS LEAVE THE ROOM AND GET LOST,
THERE WILL BE NO EXCUSE LEFT!
WE CAN'T OPEN THE DOOR!

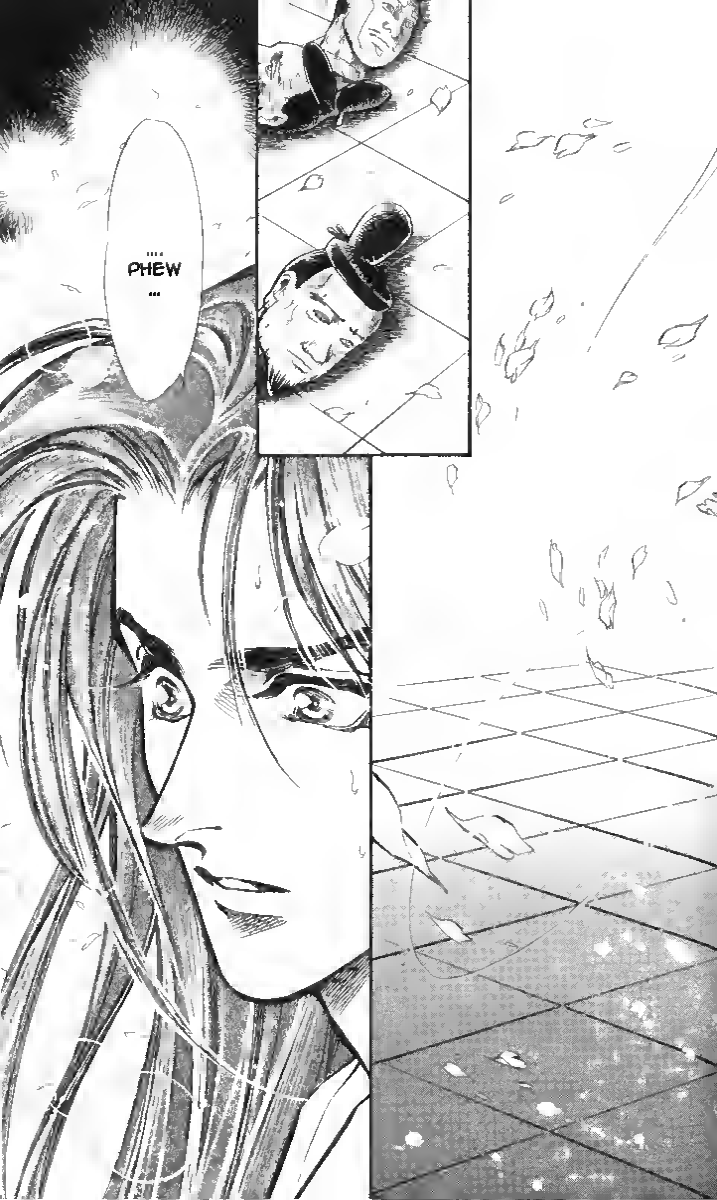
Are you also the one that have ill intention against the emperor ?
If so we shall make your head be the same like this
Do you or do not have ill intention against the emperor ..?

BUT RATHER
WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND TAKING ITS SIDE
DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN DISREGARDING THE EMPEROR
I HAVE NO ILL INTENTION AGAINST THE EMPEROR ...
ISN'T AN UNLAWFUL ACT IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR
IS AN ACTION THAT WILL DEMEAN THE EMPEROR ...?

YOU APPARENTLY ARE THE ONES WHO FOUGHT AGAINST THE HOUSE OF ASHIKAGA SHOGUN.
IT'S MY TURN TO ASK QUESTIONS.
DOES YOUR LORD ENJOY SEEING ...
SUCH PITIFUL DEED OF...
TAKING REVENGE AGAINST A FORMALITY...!

SAITO
?!
SAITO
!!
WHOA



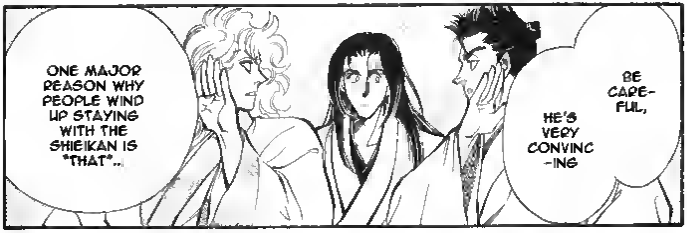

....
PHEW
...

NOW THAT WE SUCCESS-FULLY CAP-TURED THE REAL PERPE-TRATORS
WELL
IT'S A HAPPY ENDING.
ALTHOUGH IT WAS JUST AN ATTEMPT, IT IS TRUE THAT THERE WAS A PLAN TO EXPOSE THE HEAD OF THE STATUES.
SAITO-SAN..
THERE THERE
UMMM ...
I'M SURE SERIZAWA-SAN WON'T HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS WANT TO ACT BY YOURSELF?
I HAVE SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU, SAITO
BY THE WAY
EH?
IT WAS THE SAME WITH THE SHIRAKAMI CULT...
YOU COULD BE TAKING ALL THE BLAME IN THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO THIS TIME AS WELL.
DO YOU THINK WE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE YOU DO SUCH A THING?

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THAT WE ARE COLLEAGUES OR COMRADES?
I'M SAYING YOU ARE STEALING A MARCH ON US.
SAITO -SAN
...COME TO THINK OF IT
TO THEM...
BRAWLING IS LIKE FESTIVITY...

IF YOU ARE FRIENDS,
YOU SHOULD HAVE THE COMMON INTEREST, SHOULD DEBATE OVER THE SAME ISSUE,
AND SHOULD ACT TOGETHER... I WOULDN'T EXACTLY SAY THAT
BUT I CAN SEE WHY,
PEOPLE WOULD "LIKE" TO ACT TOGETHER SINCE THEY ARE FRIENDS
!
IF IT'S AL-READY THE SAME HUH?
IF YOU'RE ALREADY HEADING THE SAME WAY
IT'S GOOD TO WALK TO-GETHER
YEAH


ONE MAJOR REASON WHY PEOPLE WIND UP STAYING WITH THE SHIEIKAN IS "THAT"...
BE CARE-FUL, HE'S VERY CONVINC-ING

I WON'T SAY THIS TO PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT STICK AROUND

MIBU – RONIN GUILD QUARTERS

THEY HAVE RETURN-ED!?

WE HANDED THE "REAL PERPETRATORS" TO JUSTICE
THAT'S VERY GOOD
I'M GLAD YOU'RE ALL SAFE...!
KONDO-SENSEI...
HIJIKATA-SAN TOO
WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?
SINCE KONDO-SAN WAS SO WORRIED
WE WERE JUST COMING OVER TO TAKE A LOOK.
NO!!
KONDO-SAN DOESN'T CHANGE HIS MIND ONCE HE DECIDES SOMETHING

HUH?
...WHAT A COOL PERSON
I'M GLAD IT WAS TAKEN CARE OF SO SWIFTLY
ANY-HOW
WHAT'S WRONG OKITA-SAN?
HIJI-KATA-SAN
JUST DROPPED SOME-THING...

...THESE ARE AMULETS.. I WOULD THINK...
WE WERE MAKING A FUSS ABOUT THE MONSTERS...
IT'S FOR PROTECTION... I SEE
LOOKS LIKE IT
HI... HIJIKATA-SAN AND AMULETS ...!?
How did he keep his face straight when he bought this!?
How was he going to keep a straight face when he returned with them
We missed out on that!
Who was saying he doesn't want to hear of it?
FOR YOU
HE BOUGHT IT...
SAITO-SAN...

LUCKILY, TRE GUARDIAR OF KYOTO BECAME OUR PATROR

IT WAS OECIDED THAT WE WOULD WORK TO MAINTAIR TRE PUBLIC PEACE

SOME SAYS THAT OUR INTERCEPTIOR OF TRE SECORD EKPOSURE OF TRE HEADS WORKED FOR US, BNT RO ORE REALLY KNOWS FOR SURE...

★KIBIMORI★ END

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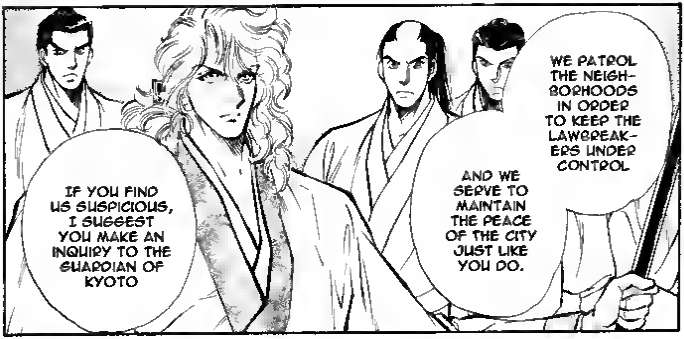
無-BURAI-頼
虎患
とら
わずらい
SICK TIGER

SAI-TO!
SO THIS STYLE OF PAINTING IS PREFERRED IN THE CITY OF KYO
SAI-TO!!
I DON'T HAVE AN EYE FOR PAINTINGS ...
WE ARE NOT SHADY CHARAC-TERS
EXPLAIN TO THOSE PUBLIC OFFICIALS
THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO DAYDREAM!

*a type of formal occasions' clothing
..WE ALWAYS ENCOUNTER THIS SORT OF TROUBLE IF I GO ON PATROL WITH HARADA-SAN
I'M SAYING THAT YOU SHOULD AT LEAST WEAR A HAKAMA*
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS DIGNITY WITHOUT IT
THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT
EX-CUSE ME..
WHAT?
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT I AM THE CAUSE OF SUSPI-CION!?
UH OH
THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO..
WE ARE THE REPRESENTA-TIVES OF THE SHINSENGUMI THAT WAS FORMED RECENTLY


WE PATROL THE NEIGHBORHOODS IN ORDER TO KEEP THE LAWBREAKERS UNDER CONTROL
AND WE SERVE TO MAINTAIN THE PEACE OF THE CITY JUST LIKE YOU DO.
IF YOU FIND US SUSPICIOUS, I SUGGEST YOU MAKE AN INQUIRY TO THE GUARDIAN OF KYOTO

SO YOU ARE UNDER CONTROL OF THE GUARDIAN
IF IT'S A PATROL, IT'D BE BETTER IF YOU DRESS ACCORDINGLY
WE DON'T HAVE THE DOUGH TO DO SO
STOP ADDING MORE TO OUR SHAME

WHAT IS IT?
IT WAS FROM THE STREET OVER THERE!

WHOA
UGH ...
THIS IS NASTY
THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE WAS A SWORD FIGHT

AN ANIMAL ...!?
MIBU - SHINSENGUMI QUARTER
IT'S A DOING OF AN ANIMAL,
RATHER LARGE ONE FOR THAT MATTER
IT SEEMS LIKE SAITO -SAN TOO
HA-RADA-SAN DID YOU JUST GOT UP?
DID YOU FIND OUT SOME-THING, OKITA ?

S-SO I WASN'T WRONG...
DID YOU SEE IT!?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US THERE?
I JUST CAUGHT A GLANCE OF IT
AND BESIDES, WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THERE WAS SUCH LARGE ANIMAL IN THE CITY?
BUT IT IS
THAT'S A NEWS-PAPER
AN EXHI-BITION HOUSE?
THEIR MAIN ATTRAC-TION IS
A LARGE TIGER
SHALL WE GO?
NAGAKURA -SAN AND TOUDOU-SAN ARE ALREADY HEADING OVER THERE

HOW COME THERE IS NO BOX OFFICE ATTENDANT?
I WONDER IF SOMETHING HAPPENED IN THERE
LET'S GO IN
HE'S HONEST
HEY
NAGAKURA-SAN
TOUDOU-SAN
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
WELL, IT'S
SERIZAWA-SA

WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S A FAKE?
THAT'S A PREPOSTEROUS ACCUSATION
...I AM TELLING YOU THAT I'M ABOUT TO CLARIFY THAT
BY DOING THIS!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
I TOLD YOU MANY TIMES THAT IT'S REAL
YEAH
IT IS INDEED REAL
WATCH YOUR MOUTH, TOWNSMAN!
DON'T YOU KNOW SERIZAWA-SENSEI, THE HEAD OF SHINSENGUMI!?
SHINSENGUMI...?
OH MY
WHY WOULD HE TRY TO MAKE THE SHINSENGUMI FAMOUS?
SERIZAWA-SENSEI!
YOUR BEHAVIOR JUST THEN WAS A BIT TOO MUCH
TOO MUCH?
THIS IS OUR DUTY, SAITO-KUN

NOW THAT THIS TIGER IS ESTABLISHED TO BE REAL
IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY THAT THE CAUSE OF LAST NIGHT'S INCIDENT IS
THIS TIGER!
THE INCI-DENT LAST NIGHT?
I HEARD THAT SOMEONE WAS EATEN BY AN ANIMAL
COME TO THINK OF IT
AS WE CANNOT IGNORE THIS ISSUE FROM THE SAFETY STAND POINT
THIS IS PERFECT
IT'S AN ORDER
YOU WILL KEEP EYES ON THE TIGER

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, HE SAID IT'S AN ORDER
...I'M SORRY
I INVOLVED ALL OF YOU AGAIN
UNTIL THE CHARGE IS CLEARED
YOU WILL HAVE TO BEAR WITH US
NO WAY
PLEASE BELIEVE ME
THERE IS NO WAY SHE WOULD KILL PEOPLE
THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT
THEN WE ARE LEAVING FOR THE PATROL
YEAH
LEAVE THE REST TO US

WELL
YOU WILL JUST BE WATCHING A TIGER IN A CAGE. IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL
THERE MIGHT BE A SLIGHT CHANCE OF AN INCIDENT
YOU WATCH YOURSELVES TOO
...BUT NAGAKURA-SAN
IF IT WAS THAT TIGER THAT CAUSED THAT INCIDENT LAST NIGHT
THAT MEANS THAT IT WAS OUT OF THAT CAGE
.....
OWNER!
UM
WELL, THIS IS...
WHAT APE YOU DOING!?
TOUDOU!
CHECK THE CAGE!

MIBU – SHINSENGUMI QUARTER
WHAT WERE YOU GUYS THERE FOR!?
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
THERE IS ANOTHER VICTIM!?
THIS CANNOT BE
WHEN I LEFT THE EXHIBITION HOUSE, IT WAS SURELY

SHIT
IT'S EMPTY !!
I DON'T SEE OKITA-SAN AND THE OTHERS
SANO -SAN
SAITO -SAN
TOU-DOU!
YOU ARE OKAY!
WHERE ARE SHINPA-CHI AND OKITA?
THEY ARE SAFE
WELL
THEY ARE SAFE, BUT...

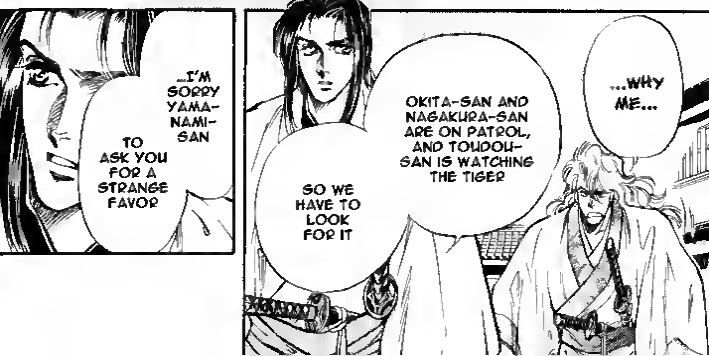
THEY ARE SAFE...
YOU SCARED ME
RIGHT THERE
SA-NO
THE TIGER
IS HERE
WHAT HAP-PENED TO YOUR WATCH!?
THE TIGER HAS ESCAPED!
WE HAVE ANOTHER VICTIM

I won't be fooled! You can't trick me with just a scar on her nose. I don't believe it!!
..LET'S HEAR IT
THAT'S A LIE !!!
I HAVE HEARD FROM YAMANAMI-SAN THAT THERE ARE MANY TALES FROM THE OLD ABOUT PEOPLE TURNING INTO TIGERS
OR TIGERS TURNING INTO PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY OF SHIN...
SHE TAKES A FORM OF A TIGER DURING THE DAY, AND AT NIGHT, SHE TAKES A FORM OF HUMAN
Don't tell me that she has a brother who is a human during the day and turns into a wolf at night
Well I wouldn't know that much

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT THE FAIRY TALES ARE REAL!?
SO THERE IS KAGUYA-HIME IS ON THE MOON AND OTO-HIME IS IN THE SEA!?
A CRANE IS...
...AND?
IF THIS GIRL (TIGER) IS NOT THE CULPRIT,
THEN WHO IS?
...SAITO IS QUITE DARING...
PEOPLE SAY THAT PAINTINGS AND SCULP-TURES CREATED BY THE MASTER ARTISTS
SOME-TIMES HARBOUR SPIRITS
COULD IT BE THAT THE STRING OF INCI-DENTS
IS CAUSED BY SUCH ARTICLES?

DO YOU SERI-OUSLY INTEND TO LOOK FOR
A PHANTOM TIGER?
DON'T YOU THINK IT COULD BE AN EXCUSE
BY THE DESPERATE OWNER OF THE EXHIBITION HOUSE?
THIS IS SUCH A WEAK PLOT IF IT IS JUST TO COVER UP THEIR DOING
BESIDES, THEY SURELY WON'T WORSEN THEIR SITUA-TION BY KILLING THE SECOND VICTIM

I THOUGHT YOU WERE MORE AGITATED
YOU ARE SURPRISINGLY CALM
SIGHS
..I'M GLAD
HUMPH


...I'M SORRY YAMANAMI-SAN
TO ASK YOU FOR A STRANGE FAVOR
SO WE HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT
OKITA-SAN AND NAGAKURA-SAN ARE ON PATROL, AND TOUDOU-SAN IS WATCHING THE TIGER
...WHY ME...

YOU SIMPLY TELL ME TO LOOK FOR A TIGER, BUT...
IT VARIES FROM A TIGER IN A PAINTING AT MYOUSHINJI TEMPLE
TO THE TIGER OF AUN AT KURAMA TEMPLE
THAT WOULD TAKE AN INCONCEIVABLE EFFORT
I HOPE I CAN BE OF HELP ...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT
THOSE ARE FAMOUS ONES
THERE ARE MORE BUT I CAN'T KNOW THEM ALL.
AND ON TOP OF THAT,
IF WE WERE TO FIND A TIGER THAT MIGHT "COME OUT" OF THE PAINTING---

BUT ASSUMING THAT YOU FIND ONE..
WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO WITH IT, SAITO-KUN?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
THEN WHAT'S THE POINT OF FINDING ONE?
I'M SORRY
After all, I might have been a bit hot-headed
I GUESS WE COULD ONLY WATCH HER CAREFULLY
AND PROTECT HER...
YOU ARE LEAVING?

WE WILL MOVE TO ANOTHER REGION
IF THERE WILL BE ANY MORE VICTIMS
WE WILL REALLY HAVE TO DESTROY THE TIGER
...I SEE
DON'T WORRY
OUR BUSINESS IS ALL ABOUT MOVING AROUND
AFTER ALL, IT IS A RIDICULOUS IDEA TO CHECK ALL THE WORKS CONCERNING TIGERS
...I GUESS THAT IS THE ONLY WAY
HEY!
DID YOU FIND THE ESCAPING TIGER?
COME TO THINK OF IT, THERE IS ONE ON THE PATROL ROUTE
WELL, ABOUT THAT...

I THOUGHT IT WAS AT THE STORE CLOSER TO THE GOJOU BRIDGE ON TONYAMACHI STREET...
WE MIGHT HAVE MISSED IN THE DARK AS WELL
THE STORE COULD HAVE BEEN CLOSED SINCE WE PATROLL-ED AT NIGHT
I DON'T RECALL
NO
HARA-DA-SAN, DO YOU KNOW THAT ONE?
THE PATROL ROUTE --
IT HAD QUITE AN---
BUT THE ONE I SAW HAS A FOLDING SCREEN WITH BAMBOO FOREST
I DO REMEM-BER A STORE THAT MIGHT BE WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT
I REMEM-BERED WELL---!
IT HAD QUITE AN EMPTY COMPO-SITION... AND

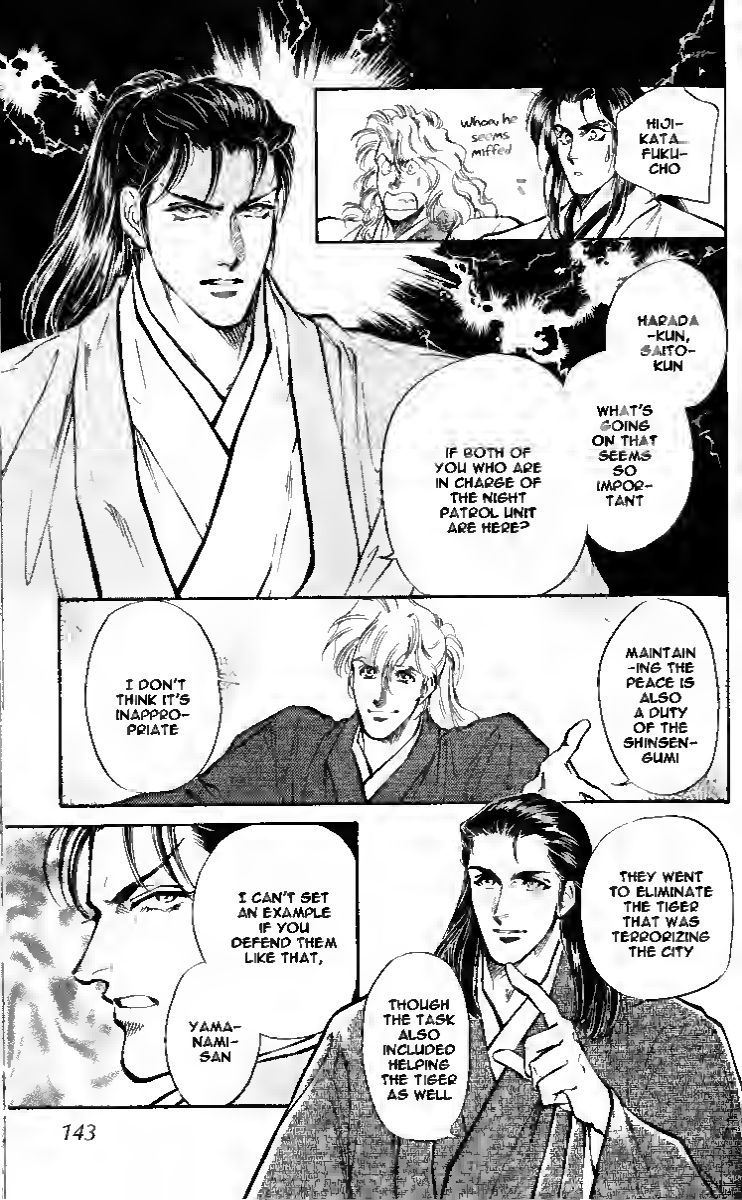
!
YEAH!
WE'RE OFF!
TO THE TONYA-MACHI STREET!
I BELIEVE SHE WANTS TO CLEAR HER NAME HERSELF
CAN YOU TAKE HER WITH YOU?
...I UNDER-STAND
COME!

WHOA
DON'T STOP SO SUD-DENLY

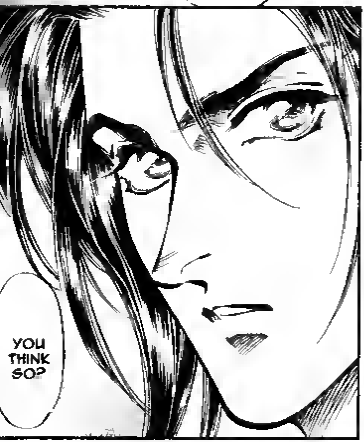
WH....OA!
SHIN-PACHI!
IT'S QUICK ....!!

HEI-
SUKE!
HUH?

サラサラ
サラサラ
サラ!
...SO YOU CLEARED YOUR NAME


HIJI-KATA-FUKU-CHO
Whoa, he seems miffed
HARADA-KUN, SAITO-KUN
WHAT'S GOING ON THAT SEEMS SO IMPOR-TANT
IF BOTH OF YOU WHO ARE IN CHARGE OF THE NIGHT PATROL UNIT ARE HERE?
MAINTAIN-ING THE PEACE IS ALSO A DUTY OF THE SHINSEN-GUMI
I DON'T THINK IT'S INAPPRO-PRIATE
THEY WENT TO ELIMINATE THE TIGER THAT WAS TERRORIZING THE CITY
I CAN'T SET AN EXAMPLE IF YOU DEFEND THEM LIKE THAT,
YAMA-NAMI-SAN
THOUGH THE TASK ALSO INCLUDED HELPING THE TIGER AS WELL

COME REPORT TO ME LATER!
SANO! SAITO!
I THINK HE WOULD BE YELLING AT US FOR A WHILE
TO REPORT JUST THE WAY IT HAPPENED
IT SHOULD BE FINE
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, SAITO?
--SO HE SAYS



THE FOLDED SCREEN THAT THEY HAD GONE TO CHECK DURING THE DAY

STILL HAD THE EMPTY COMPOSITION AS THEY SAW EARLIER

THE PARTY OF THE EXHIBITION HOUSE HAS LEFT THE CITY BEFORE DAWN THAT DAY

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無-BURAI-頼
青嵐
BLUE STORM

GLINT
SFX: hack
DON'T LET ANYONE GET AWAY!!
CUT 'EM UP!!
YOU THINK IT'S EASY?!
THE ENEMIES ARE WINNING BY SHEER NUMBERS!

GO YO!
STOP RESISTING!
OFFICERS ARRIVING
Note: Ronin ("wave-man") were unemployed samurai. With a harsh economy employment as retainer was hard to find and many ronin became criminals.
YOU RONIN! DISTURBING THE PEACE OF THE CITY!
ROUND THEM ALL UP!
RETREAT!
——?!
THEY'RE RUNNING INTO AN ALLEY!
GO AFTER THEM!

YOU IDIOTS!
WE'RE THE COMPANY OF MIBU ROSHI LED BY KYOTO GUARDIAN-SAMA
SHINSEN-GUMI!
WE'RE ON DUTY TO CONTROL UNRULY RONIN!
Note—The Shinsen-gumi were a mix of 100 unemployed samurai formed to protect the Tokugawa shogunate and the samurai way of life.
Note Hakama - a div ded kilt used to des gnate a person of samurai rank
HEY!
YOU TWO! SAY SOMETHING TO THEM, TOO!
SAITO!
SHINPACHI!
Mumble..
THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU TO WEAR A HAKAMA...
Bails them out
WHAT, IT'S MY FAULT?! IS IT?!
BYARAKP
I THOUGHT IT WAS A DISPUTE AGAINST RONINS ..
WE REALLY NEED
UNIFORMS

Note: Fukucho ("vice-commander") is any officer acting as second-in-command.

pale blue that screams at your senses
TO PUT IT MILDLY; IT'S IN BAD TASTE.
I UNDERSTAND THE PATTERN REPRESENTS AKOH-GISHI (RIGHTEOUS SAMURAI)
BUT THIS COLOR IS...
Wha—
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, OKITA?
THIS COLOR IS THE SKY-BLUE OF SEPPUKU ATTIRE
THIS IS THE COLOR OF RESOLVING TO RISK ONE'S LIFE!
Whisper
Whisper
AND IT'S ESPECIALLY INSANE.
...BUT
A SKY-BLUE LINING IS SYNONYMOUS FOR PROVINCIAL SAMURAI
Whisper
Whisper
Whisper
...HE HIMSELF WHO'S DEFENDING IT
I BET THERE'S A GAP BETWEEN HIS CONCEPT AND THE ACTUAL HAORI
Note: A haori is an overcoat often used to display what trade or civil service you performed. The Shinsen-gumi were tasked with keeping the peace in Kyoto.
Whisper
MIGHT ACTUALLY BE SHAKEN UP
Whisper
...
...

I WILL WEAR ANYTHING BUT... THAT ——— !!
GU
IAP
OH, MY
THEY MAKE A FUSS ABOUT EVERY LITTLE THING.
SERIZAWA...
IF YOU JUST NEED TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM OTHERS,
YOU CAN SIMPLY UNIFY THE COLOR IN BLACK OR SOMETHING FROM HAORI TO HAKAMA
WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE HUNT AND PURSUIT, IT'S REALISTIC

Note: The Akoh-gishi were known as the "47 Ronin" who, on 14 December, 1702, selflessly avenged the unjust execution of their daimyo
BEHAVING AS IF YOU'RE LOYAL WARRIORS
EXAMPLES OF WARRIORS, THE AKOH-GISHI...
INDEED.
WEARING SUCH A SHOWY UNIFORM, ALMOST LIKE WE'RE ENTERTAINERS.
AS IF YOU'RE ASKING THEM TO AVOID YOU.
IT'S NICE TO "PLAY" SAMURAI
BUT LET'S BE REAL, SHALL WE?
...
I OBJECT TO YOUR COMMENT WE "PLAY" SAMURAI

局中
一、士道に背く間敷き事
一、局を脱するを許さず
一、勝手に金策すべからず
一、依怙贔屓すべからず
THEN, LET ME ASK YOU!
WHY ON EARTH IS ONE OF OUR TABOOS "NEVER BE INVOLVED IN DEEDS OPPOSING THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI"?
WHAT IS THE CODE OF SAMURAI
HIJIKATA-KUN?
THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IS
GUIDING RULES FOR WARRIORS
I'M ASKING
WHAT THE GUIDING RULES ARE
TO RENDER SERVICE, TO UPHOLD TRUST, TO BE JUST
TO KNOW DECORUM, TO MAINTAIN INNOCENCE, TO VALUE MARTIAL ARTS
TO RESPECT HONOR, TO DEVOTE ONESELF, TO RECOGNIZE SHAME
THOSE ARE THE GUIDING RULES OF BUSHIDO .!
WITHOUT CONCEIT, EMBELLISHMENT, BUT TO HAVE COMPASSION

OUR STATUS AS RONIN, WITHOUT A LORD TO RENDER OUR ALLEGIANCE—
IT'S LUDICROUS THAT YOU MENTION SEPPUKU OR RISKING ONE'S LIFE
WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE HONOR ANYONE RECOGNIZES!
IF HE, HIMSELF, THE ENFORCER AND FOUNDER, BEHAVES IN SUCH MANNER
YOU TELL ME WHAT IT IS
IF ITS NOT "PLAYING SAMURAI"?
COME, COME
SERIZAWA-SENSEI

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, IF IT'S TOO MUCH TO ASK OF THEM, ESPECIALLY IF THE ART THEY'VE LEARNED IS THE PROVINCIAL SWORD.
THEY MAY HAVE STUDIED THE ART OF THE SWORD
BUT THEY ARE NOT TRUE SWORDSMEN.
SANO!
THINKING WE'LL KEEP QUIET
HE'S PUSHING HIS LUCK
REALLY?
IT'S AN ACT OF ACTUAL WARFARE!
TENNEN RISHIN-RYU TEACHES PROOFS ARE BETTER THAN ARGUMENTS!

THEN, WHY DON'T YOU SHOW ME
THE PROOF YOU MENTIONED?
PLEASE HOLD ON A MINUTE!
WE'RE DISCUSSING THE UNIFORM NOW
IF YOU PREFER TO DISCUSS THE SKILLS OF YOUR SWORDS, WE'LL SEE THAT IN THE DOJO.

Note: Dojo is a martial arts training hall

I RECOM-MEND
THIS!
RUSTLE
— YOU KNOW MY OPINION
QUICK GLANCE
I —
... IT'S GOING NOWHERE.
I AM SURE YOU (KONDO FACTION) WOULD SUPPORT HIJIKATA, DON'T YOU?
THE MEN HERE ALSO WOULD PROBABLY TAKE MY SIDE

—SAITO-KUN
YOU DECIDE
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A CALM AND FAIR DECISION.
SINCE YOU DON'T BELONG TO ANY FACTION
I WON'T ASK YOU TO MAKE A DECISION RIGHT NOW
—WELL, BEING SUCH THE CASE
THINK IT OVER CAREFULLY, AND THEN DECIDE
I HAVE NO OBJEC-TIONS
THAT'S FINE.
W-WAIT

DISMISSED!
...
OH, MAN
WHY DOES SAITO KEEP DIGGING HIS OWN GRAVE?
POOR GUY
IT'S NOT FAIR FOR SAITO TO BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY
...
KNOWING WELL WHO'S GOING TO WIN
THERE IS SOME TRUTH
TO WHAT SERIZAWA SAYS

I MEAN...
I'M SIMPLY SAYING I FEEL SORRY FOR SAITO-SAN
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY, OKITA?!
OUT OF ALL THE THINGS, ASKING HIM TO CHOOSE THIS HAORI IS RATHER...
...
SAITO.
SIGH

Although I don't really like Senzawa...
PLEASE!
ANYTHING BUT THAT HAORI!
BUT
REGARDING THE UNIFORM — IS IT?
...WELL YOU KNOW —
I'M SURE YOU KNOW, BUT —
NAGAKURA-SAN!
HARADA-SAN!
OKITA-SAN!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE DOING THIS
IT'S ALREADY A DIFFICULT TROUBLE
SAITO WOULD BE DISTURBED.
AND YOU MAKE THE SITUATION MORE COMPLICATED

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT CHOOSING A UNIFORM.
THE PROBLEM IS —
IT MAY WIND UP DIVIDING THE COMPANY.
IF THE TIME PASSES, EVEN THE COMMONERS WILL BE AGITATED.
THERE'S NO TIME TO PONDER.
THEN WHY AM I...?
I BELIEVE WHAT SERIZAWA-KYOKUCHO SAID WAS RIGHT
I ALSO THINK THAT HAORI LOOKS TERRIBLE.
..."PONDER"?

THE ANSWER IS
SNAP
ALREADY WITHIN YOUR HEART, ISN'T THAT SO?
THERE IS NOTHING TO "CONTEMPLATE" OVER
SAITO-KUN.
—
— YES.

WAS TRULY A HARSH COMMENT
"TO PLAY SAMURAI"
"IN THE SNOW AND FROST, THE COLOR OF THE BLOSSOMS REMAIN
THE SCENT OF THE PLUM WAFTS IN THE AIR, EVEN YET AFTER THE PETALS HAVE GONE."
MEN WHO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT WHAT REALLY IS RESOLVING TO DIE,
IT ANNOYED ME TO HEAR
TALK LIGHTLY OF RISKING ONE'S LIFE AND OF BUSHIDO
I COMPOSED THIS WHEN I WAS STILL A MEMBER OF THE TENGU-TO.
IT'S ONE OF THOSE POEMS YOU READ UPON FACING DEATH

I CAN'T SEE THE REASON WHY YOU THINK SO HIGHLY OF ME
I ALSO AM ONE OF THOSE WHO HAS NO HONOR WORTHY OF RECOGNITION
...
THE REASON, YOU SAY?
SFx: WHOOSH
T O S S

SFX:
THWACK
SFX: CLANG

...THIS
CALM AGGRESSION IS WHY I THINK SO HIGHLY OF YOU.
——"
...
SORRY IF I STARTLED YOU.
THERE, THERE.

RATHER THAN PROTECT THE KITTEN,
WITHOUT THINKING, I CHOSE TO COUNTER
AS SUCH —— ?
HE THINKS HIGHLY OF ME
TENGU-TO ——
—— IS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION?
I FEEL SERIZAWA-KYOKUCHO, WHOSE ARGUMENT IS RIGHT, IS TWISTED.
—— I CAN'T TELL.

DURING THAT TIME (WHILE HE WAS AT TENGU-TO)
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
COME TO THINK OF IT, MEMBERS OF THE TENGU-TO WORE
ALL WHITE WITH WHITE TASUKI AND WHITE HAKIMA-CHI IN TIMES OF ACTION
Note: Tasukiis a sash to tie back the kimono sleeves for ease of motion. Hachimaki is a headband used to keep sweat out of the eyes; it protects the forehead and show martial resolve
That's right
I'M SUPPOSED TO DECIDE THE UNIFORM...
I WONDER WHAT HE'LL DO
SAITO
YOU MEAN THE UNIFORM?
HE WAS JUST CAUTIONED BY OKITA

HUSH
WAIT, SANO!
THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
I WONDER IF THEY'RE THE ONES WE FOUGHT THE OTHER DAY?
THEY HAVEN'T CHANGED; ATTACKING IN NUMBERS
HEY —
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN SAKE THAT YOU GET AWAY FROM HERE
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT
I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD RUN AN ERRAND TO THE MIBU STATION TO CALL FOR MORE ARMS

HEY
COME ON IN
——!!
小料理
HIJIKATA-FUKUCHO!
YOU'RE IN THE WAY OF OTHER CUSTOMERS
WHY NOT COME IN AND SIT
INSTEAD OF STANDING AROUND?
I CAN'T DRINK
WELL,
FUKUCHO
……

I AM SORRY, SAITO-KUN
THAT I WOULD END UP GIVING YOU TROUBLE.
— IT'S OKAY
HOWEVER
I STILL HAVEN'T HEARD YOUR IDEA OF BUSHIDO
YOU'VE ALREADY HEARD OF THE RUN-OF-THE-MILL VERSION OF BUSHIDO FROM KAMO
COULD I HEAR FUKUCHO'S IDEA OF BUSHIDO?

Note: Bushido (bushi "warrior" and -do "life or way") is an ethical system using the warrior arts as a means of life and death, governing all behaviour and actions

GLUG GLUG
So much for a person who can't drink.
SPLASH
HEY!
...
BAM!!
— SUCH THINGS AS BUSHIDO IS ABOUT
ACTION AND
FACING ITS CONSEQUENCES.

HOW YOU ACT
AS A BUSHI
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT DEATH WILL TAKE CARE OF IT ALL.
THE WAY YOU DIE, THE VERY LAST RESORT, IN THE VERY MOMENT —
HOW YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR YOUR ACTIONS.
THE WAY YOU LIVE COMES BEFORE
THE WAY YOU DIE

I DEMONSTRATE MY BUSHIDO BY THE WAY I LIVE.
YOU SHOW ME YOUR BUSHIDO
BY THE WAY YOU LIVE.

THINGS SUCH AS BUSHIDO ARE NOT
SOMETHING YOU CAN EXPLAIN IN SO MANY WORDS.
I'M NOT GOOD IN GIVING SPEECHES.
I'M ALSO
NOT GOOD IN GIVING SPEECHES
HIJIKATA-SAN.

I CAME HERE (SHINSEN GUMI) BECAUSE I WAS TOLD TO GET HELP
JUST TWO ARE FIGHTING AGAINST MANY RONIN.
I PRESUME THIS IS A PERSONAL CONFLICT
THAT IS FAR FROM THEIR OFFICIAL DUTY?
...I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, BUT
HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH IT, SERIZAWA-SENSEI?
YES.
THAT'S FORBIDDEN BY OUR BY-LAWS
BUT...
I SEE
WE CANNOT MOVE OUR TROOPS IF IT'S A PERSONAL CONFLICT
NIIMI.

THE KONDO FACTION CONFRONTING US (SERIZAWA FACTION) —
IF THEY GROW LESS IN NUMBERS, IT WOULD BE QUITE CONVENIENT.
WHAT'S WRONG?
DO YOU HAVE BUSINESS WITH THIS STATION?
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
HARADA-SAN AND NAGAKARA?!

WAIT, SAITO-KUN!
WHERE ARE THEY?
I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO GO
KNOWING THAT YOU'RE GOING TO AID A PERSONAL CONFLICT.
——!
GRIND
EITHER THAT, OR
WILL OUR FUKUCHO HIMSELF
VIOLATE OUR BY-LAWS?

EVEN AS WE SPEAK
HARADA-SAN AND NAGAKURA-SAN ARE ..
DASH
SAITO?!
Slam
GRAB

RUSKUE
CROWD STIRS
THOSE WHOSE HANDS ARE FREE
COME WITH ME!

I WILL AID THEM AS AN OFFICIAL DUTY...!
I PETITION BOTH DIRECTORS, SERIZAWA AND NIIMI, FOR THE DISPATCH ORDER —!
...!

SAITO HAJIME, A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE FUKUCHO!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
TO CONTROL UNRULY RONIN IS A DUTY OF SHINSEN-GUMI
I CANNOT IGNORE IT IF I HEAR THERE'S A CONFLICT

SINCE TOO MANY COMMON MEMBERS ARE LOOKING ON
IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO WITHDRAW.
Note: Serizawa is suggesting they not air their quarrels before the rank and file Shinsen-gumi.
SERIZAWA-SENSEI?!
I WILL ALLOW YOUR DISPATCH.
FINE
TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS A PERSONAL CONFLICT.
I'LL GO TO THE SCENE MYSELF
DO WHATEVER YOU SEE FIT.

GOOD!
WE'RE GOING!
YES!
SFX: STEP FORWARD
SAITO—
DON'T REGRET IT

YOU WOUND UP DECIDING IN CONFUSION
IN CONFUSION, YOU SAY?
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S OKAY?
IT SEEMS SUITABLE FOR SHINSEN-GUMI.

WE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER!
SHIT! THERE IS NO END TO THIS!
HARADA-SAN! NAGAKURA-SAN!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT—?!
AH! I'VE BEEN WAITING——
THAT HAORI!!

HE SURE STANDS OUT...
..I GUESS
IF YOU SEE IT IN THIS LIGHT
I MAY NOT BE SO... BAD
★青嵐★おわり

BACKGROUND OF THE SETUP
THE REASON WHY THE EDITOR OFFERED THIS SERIES IS BECAUSE I MENTIONED HIJIKATA TOSHIZO AS ONE OF THE "BEST 10 OF THE MALE FIGURES IN HISTORY." PLANNED BY "HISTORY AND ROMANCE DELUX" MAGAZINE BEFORE.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENS UNTIL YOU MENTION IT.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK ON SHINSEN-GUMI?
THE REASON FOR MY AMBITION TO BE A MANGA-KA
TO DISCLOSE IT QUIETLY, "SHINSEN-GUMI" WAS
WHEN I WAS STILL A JUNIOR-HIGH STUDENT
NOW, MY DREAM FINALLY COMES TRUE ——!!

THERE WAS NO WAY I, WHO LACKED PLANNING ABILITY OR CONCRETE PLANS, WAS DEVELOPING THE STORYLINE.
I was busy with Heian
BACK WHEN I WAS STILL IN JUNIOR HIGH?!
WHAT WAS I GONNA DRAW AND HOW,
WOAH!
...IF I PUT IT THAT WAY, IT SOUNDS SORT OF COOL, BUT.
THE REALITY IS RATHER HARSH
I RECENTLY FEEL THE STRONG EMPHASIS ON TAKING ITS COURSE PART OF THE "THRILLING HISTORY OF THE LAST DAYS OF THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE AS IT TAKES ITS COURSE"
ASUKA FUJIMOTO
ミステリーDX
I SPEND THE DAYS STARTING ALL OVER.
It could well have been a start from the negative
A CHARACTER WHOM IS TURNING OUT TO HAVE SCARY PERSONALITY BECAUSE IT TOOK ITS COURSE
CHARACTERS WHO TURNED OUT TO BE HANDSOME BECAUSE IT TOOK ITS COURSE

THAT MAIN CHARACTER WILL BE SAITO HAJIME IF I DO CREATE A STORY ABOUT THE SHINSEN-GUMI!!
—— EVERTHING ELSE MIGHT HAVE JUST "TAKEN ITS COURSE"

SO THAT EVEN THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THE SHINSEN-GUMI CAN ENJOY THE WORK!
I WILL WORK HARD TO FILL THE GAP AMONGST DREAM, LOVE, AND IDEAL
THIS IS SHINSEN-GUMI X FILE THINKING AS IT IS BORING TO BE JUST FAITHFUL TO HISTORY.

I/O MYSTERY D/X EDITING DEPARTMENT
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I AWAIT YOUR OPINIONS, THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, REQUESTS, ETC.

★余談——こぼればなし——★おわり

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HTTP://SBM.BLAHSOFT.COM

PROOFREADER'S RANT:

DON'T EVER LET ANYONE TELL YOU PROOFING IS BORING...! RENDERING SERIZAWA'S MAGNIFICENT EULOGY WAS A REAL CHALLENGE, I'M STILL NOT SURE I'VE DONE HIS VERSE JUSTICE. THE MYRIAD MEANINGS OF THE KANJI MAKE IT RICH IN ALLUSION (WHICH SERIZAWA USES TO GREAT EFFECT) AND HIGHLY EVOCATIVE. OUR T/L DESERVES PRAISE FOR BEING WILLING TO TACKLE SUCH A DIFFICULT PIECE. AND THEN, AFTER SUCH A POIGNANT MOMENT, THEY NEARLY COME TO BLOWS OVER THE COLOR OF A HAORI...! BISHIES WITH SWORDS--SHEESH!